

Special Report: Candle Fires in the United States

Question:

“What products burn with open flames, are often used near combustible materials, come with few, and generally vague warnings, and may be among the most hazardous possessions in your home?”¹

Answer:

“You may not have guessed **candles**, but they’re perhaps the only *uncontrolled open flame* devices still present in most homes today.”

Between 1993 and 1997 candles caused an annual average:

8,690 fires
104 deaths
948 injuries
\$126.0 million in damage

Do you think that YOU are safe when using candles? Have you ever left a candle burning when you were not in the room...?

Candle fire statistics from around the nation:

- ❖ 36% of home candle fires occurred because the candles were unattended.
- ❖ The percentage of fires started by candles has almost tripled from 1.1% in the early 1980’s up to 2.9% in 1996.
- ❖ 44% of candle fires started in the home are started in the bedroom. Mattresses and bedding were first ignited in many of these fires.
- ❖ 5% of home candle fires started when the occupant fell asleep while the candle was burning.
- ❖ Candles are designed with combustibles in the wax that seem a certain invitation to disaster.
- ❖ And 18% occurred because some form of combustible material was left too close to the candle.²

¹ Information found in *Fire Findings*.

² All statistics from *Fire Marshals Quarterly*, Winter 1999.

This information was gathered by Boulder Fire-Rescue. For more information on candle fire safety or general fire safety information, please call (303)441-3350.